

to excessive melancholy, feeling that they
 have been
 born out of due time and are making their
 first bow on
 a stage where all is over.

It was natural that the generation which
 came to birth
 with the nineteenth century should feel this
 disillusion.

There seemed nothing but a puppet-show left
 in progress
 in the theatre of the world. It had been
 otherwise for
 their fathers. The Werthers had forgotten
 their own sor-
 rows as they beheld the earth alight with
 Liberty, and the
 Rights of Man coming in glory on the clouds
 of Heaven.

Like clouds, indeed, those Rights had
 vanished; in their
 place had risen in the same year, 1804, the
 pale and baleful
 stars of *Rene* and *Olermann*; but in their
 place also had
 ensued for twenty years, terrible and yet
 magnificently

titanic, a Battle of the Gods* Disillusion was
 kept at bay.
 War still seemed intoxicatingly romantic
 then, however
 mistakenly; a field for genius, not merely for
 the muddling
 mediocrities that floundered through the
 slime of our kst
 conflict. A Piedmontese private in the Grande
 Armee has
 told how, at the mere sight of that short
 grey-coated

figure riding down the line before Moscow,
 he found
 himself breathing as hard as if he had been
 running, and
 bathed in sweat amid the cold of a Russian
 winter's day.

It was not thus that the armies of 1917 felt
 about their
 generals. But after the romantic epic of
 Napoleon, there
 followed a poor farce of rejuvenated kings and

reactionary
governments. This was what the generation
that had
heard through boyhood the guns of
Austerlitz and J6na
and "Wagram sat down to contemplate, as
they and the
century together came of age. And so there
were other
caged eaglets in these years besides the Due
de Reichstadt;
otter smouldering firebrands, lit too late,
besides the
heroes of Stendhal. The enormous energy of
a Balzac,
a Dumas, a Hugo, might go trampling onward
under that